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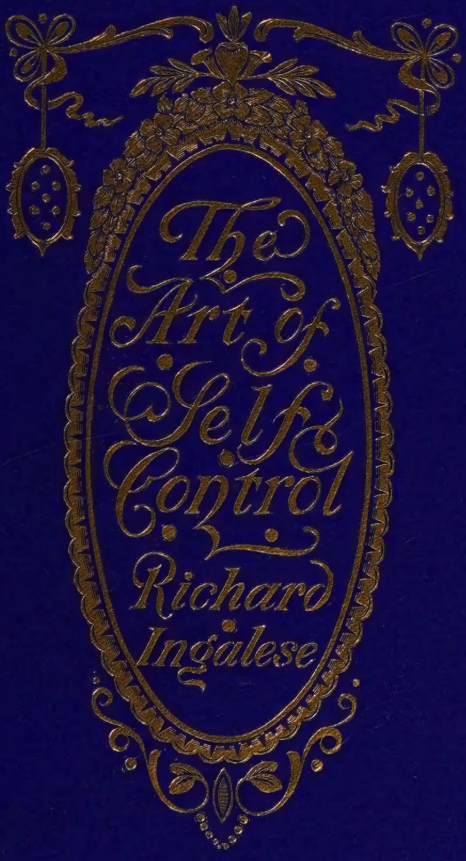

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THE ART OF SELF-CONTROL

By
RICHARD INGALESE

A chapter from
The History and Power of Mind
by the same author

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THE ART OF SELF-CONTROL.

One of the reputed wisest men that ever lived said: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Of course I refer to Solomon.

This lecture on "The Art of Self-Control" might be said to be an amplification of that utterance of Solomon. I am free to admit that it is much easier to talk about self-control than it is to practice it, but, nevertheless, there are certain ways whereby we can, in a measure, exercise self-control. The fact that Solomon made the remark quoted does not appeal to one particularly unless one can see the reason for so acting. There are persons who, if they read in the Scriptures that certain things should be done, will do them because the Scriptures com-

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mand them to be done. And there are persons who will do things because their parents or someone whom they love or honor says such a thing should be done. In such cases the effort is but a perfunctory one, unless a reason for so acting be given, and very little good comes of the obedience to the command under either of those circumstances. Let us see if there is a reason for Solomon's aphorism.

It goes without saying that no one can be truly great who has not the power of self-control. It does not matter how many virtues a man may have, if he allows himself to give way to paroxysms of anger and loses his self-control at critical moments, his greatness becomes largely diminished; neither can he become really successful in any chosen field or line of work unless he has first developed self-control. Napoleon said if he could keep his anger below his chin he could control men. In other words,

when his emotions became dominant then self-control was lost and when he lost control of himself he had no power to control others. Grant's great strength lay in his power of self-control at critical moments. George Dewey destroyed the Spanish Fleet quickly and completely because he controlled himself first and afterward his men. His command to his Captain was: "When you are ready, Gridley, you may fire." Imagine, if you can, a statesman who has not developed this art of self-control and you will find that at the moment he needs self-mastery most it utterly deserts him. Imagine one of the great financiers of this country not having sufficient control over his tongue to keep his plans secret, and how long would he be a factor in the world of finance?

In the case of physical health, unless there is an approximate control of the emotions, there will never be permanent good health, because there cannot be per-

fect health without perfect self-control. The reactions which naturally follow outbursts of emotions bring about physical disorder; if not immediately, then in the course of time. And above all, there can be no progress made in Occultism unless there be self-control; and that which really determines the growth of a student is his power to control himself. Without this power, intuition cannot be fully awakened, clairvoyance and clairaudience cannot manifest and his development is otherwise greatly retarded. A student cannot make use of the higher forces of nature unless he becomes self-controlled first. A mental healer cannot assist or relieve a patient so long as he is in a perturbed condition of mind himself. A student cannot dominate his own body unless his mind is poised and undisturbed. He cannot concentrate on a person at a distance and get his thoughts unless he has the power to make his own

objective mind quiescent while the power of concentration is put into action.

Some of the reasons I have given why we should master the art of self-control may not interest or appeal to many of you from an intellectual standpoint, but here is one that may. Every time you lose your self-control, your aura or photosphere becomes so actively inharmonious that all the creations you wish to draw to you are repelled. You cannot be a successful creator upon the spiritual, mental or physical planes unless you are able to control your emotions sufficiently to enable that which you have created to come to you. Another reason for exercising self-control is this: One can never escape from pain until self-control is acquired. One can never reach the place of peace until the conquest of self is made.

As understood by the Occultist, self-control is the control of the objective mind by the subjective mind. Another

way of expressing the same thing is to say that self-control is the control of the emotions by the higher mind. This latter statement may seem more tangible to you. Sensations and emotions are the manifestations of the objective mind of man as we have heretofore seen.

One complete conquest of the objective mind by the subjective mind is sufficient to establish self-mastery. In other words, we do not have a new objective mind to conquer in each natural incarnation. To illustrate this let us take hydrogen to represent the objective mind and oxygen to represent the subjective mind. Now the time for the union of the two minds has come and the oxygen blends with the hydrogen making a drop of water. The union of the two in the drop of water corresponds to the union which makes the real inner man. This drop of water may be at one time in a clay jar, at another time in an iron vessel, and another day in a crockery

bowl, and then in a Dresden cup; it is the same drop of water no matter what its environment may be. And so it is during all your different incarnations; there is but one entity, the psychic man, who is composed of these two minds incarnating together in different physical bodies; and if you once conquer your objective mind you will be its ruler throughout eternity. Looked at in this light, it does not seem such a hard thing to do when you consider that you have only one conquest to make. But while there may be but one conquest there will be many battles to fight and it is during these battles that victory is constantly shifting, sometimes being on one side and sometimes on the other; but finally the conquest must be made by the subjective mind.

In the early part of our evolution the pleasures of physical and animal life seem to be greater than the pain and consequently the subjective mind, in order that it might receive the pleasures of

sensation, permits the objective mind to have absolute dominion. But any force grows with use and the objective mind, as it manifests itself more and more, becomes so strong that finally the reactions that follow pleasure bring more pain than pleasure, and the subjective mind awakens to the situation and begins to demand a way out of pain. We have been indulging in these sensual pleasures during all the ages past; life after life we have given way to the objective mind, and have allowed it absolute sway and dominion, because we thought there was more pleasure to be had out of life in that way. But reactions came and pain taught us that there is a better way to live. Pain is the evidence that the objective mind has not been fully conquered.

In the last lecture you were shown some of the characteristics of both minds, but there are a few other facts which I will mention which may possi-

bly help you to identify yourselves with the subjective mind, or your real self. The subjective mind is the "I am I" of man; it is the self-consciousness, or that part of him which studies the states of his consciousness and modes of mind. It is the center of consciousness in him and until it has been awakened there can be no self-control. Emotions will not control themselves, and as the term implies, there must be a Self which can control them. There are two aspects of both these minds, the positive and the negative. In the subjective mind the negative side is the intellectual and the positive side is the will. But at this period in our history the intellectual side of our natures is awakened and the will is not. The objective mind also has two aspects, the negative or reasoning side, and the positive side or desire. These two aspects in the objective mind are blended to a large extent and because they are thus united that mind is strong.

Our first great object should be to awaken the will portion or force aspect of the subjective mind, in order that the will and the intellect, united, may control the objective mind. There is force enough in the positive side of this subjective mind to accomplish anything it desires and therefore it is to our interest to awaken this latent but tremendous force in ourselves. Let us see how it works. I say I wish to do something. That is the desire or the positive side of my objective mind expressing itself. But another aspect of my mind replies: "No, you must not do that because it is not right." Here are certain aspects of my two minds in activity, the desire or positive portion of my objective mind and the intellectual or negative portion of my subjective mind; and if my will or positive portion of my subjective mind is not awakened, it will be more than likely that the positive side of my objective mind will win the battle. But

if the positive side of my objective mind says I want to do something, and my will or the positive side of my subjective says: You do not want to do anything of the kind and you shall not," then there is put into action a greater force than desire and the desire is overcome by the higher or positive side of my subjective mind—the will.

The emotions are natural forces on their proper plane; and because they are natural many persons think it unnecessary to control them; and many who would like to control them do not know how because they do not understand their own natures. Because a thing is natural is no reason why it should not be controlled. Electricity is a natural force. Used properly for illuminating purposes, it is a very good thing. But it is a natural force and can be used to destroy human bodies and valuable property also, so there may be a perversion of natural forces through the misuse of

them, or by not controlling them. To understand our emotions we must analyze them, since they seem to make up the greater portion of ourselves, and their name is legion. In appearance they are many, and yet, on close analysis, we find only four basic ones and the battle will not seem so hard if we can realize this.

The first great emotion, the one that causes us the most needless suffering, is Fear. The second cardinal emotion is Sensuousness. The third basic emotion is Sex Desire; and the fourth, and most subtle of all, is Vanity. These are the basic elements of the emotional nature. You cannot conceive of any emotion that has not its origin in one or more of these four. Let us briefly examine the nature of each of these emotions, since the larger part of the actions of mankind are directly attributable to one or more of them.

Fear is the cause of most anger, most

jealousy, most murder, failure, theft, doubt, discouragement, despondency and many other lesser inharmonious conditions. Analyze any one of these states of mind and you will find that fear is the father of it. Eliminate fear and you have destroyed the root or basis for many of the emotions which lead men astray. Begin your fight directly upon fear—not the many phases of it—and a tremendous amount of force will be saved; for it must be conquered before very much will be accomplished in life. You remember you were taught in another lecture that the mind is magnetic, and draws to itself whatever it frequently thinks about. When you are constantly fearing something, you are drawing toward you the thing you fear, and the reason humanity has not been swept from this planet long ago is because it has shifted its fears from one object to another so often that it has never held to one thing long enough to destroy itself.

To accomplish rapidly the destruction of this great enemy it is well to begin by controlling some of its grosser forms, such as physical cowardice. Great numbers of men and women are inwardly the most wretched cowards and yet suppress the external expression of their fears because ashamed of them. Here is where the fear of public opinion is greater than the fear of something else, and the emotion is not conquered but shifted. Try to conquer your cowardice, because it is an enemy to you and is retarding your development.

Then there are very few persons who do not fear someone. You may not be conscious of the fact, but if you stop to think, you will see that it is true. You dread to meet Mr. Blank because you do not know what he will think of you, or because he is wealthy and you are not, and you are afraid you cannot make so great a display as he can. Or perhaps you have heard that Mr. Blank is a great

statesman, and you are in awe of statesmen; so you stammer and grow red and wish you were a thousand miles away when you are introduced to him. The first thing to do toward overcoming this fear of persons is to declare, "I am not afraid of Mr. Blank, nor of anyone else." Then calling to mind the image of Mr. Blank, say to it as if he were there in person, "Mr. Blank, you have not the power to make me uncomfortable, and I am not afraid of you," and continue to repeat this assertion till your perturbation has subsided and you feel that you could face him without a tremor of fear or embarrassment.

Many women are afraid of mice. I have seen a room full of women put to the most ignominious flight, screaming like lunatics because a tiny mouse ran across the floor. To cowards of that class I would suggest that you put a mouse into a cage and keep it where you can look at it. Examine its little body

through a magnifying glass and make friends with it, declaring constantly while you are looking at it that you are not afraid of mice; that there is nothing about them for you to fear; that they are small centers in consciousness and you are a larger center in the same consciousness; that the same life principle that sustains them sustains you; and after you have come to a realizing sense of your relative positions your fears will fade away, never to return.

When you have eliminated the grosser forms of fear, then attack the finer forms, such as fear of the unseen or the unknown. Many persons' lives are made utterly wretched because of their fear of the future. They are continually expecting things that never happen. Others are afraid of the criticism of the world, and a common question on their lips is: "What will people think?" You should remember that the world always

criticises and condemns everything and everybody that it does not understand. You must declare, therefore, that you are not afraid of the criticism of any individual nor of the public at large; that you are not dependent upon anyone for your health, wealth or happiness; and that the approval and disapproval of other persons, whether collective or individual, are alike to you. If you declare this earnestly and often you will overcome all fear of criticism.

Fear being eliminated, we next turn our attention to Sensuousness, which is the result of a perversion of natural forces. The animal indulges his senses in order that he may live; but man indulges his senses not only that he may live, but also to get pleasure from his indulgences; and it is the over-indulgence that constitutes the perversion of this natural force. Reaction seldom follows the natural indulgence of the senses for the purpose of living. If a creature eats

because he is hungry and stops when the hunger is appeased, there will be no reaction; but when the senses are indulged more for pleasure than from necessity, and there has been an over-stimulation, a reaction always follows the indulgence. Asceticism is one of the moral reactions from sensuousness. In many places in the Orient, especially in India, asceticism is taught as the proper method of living. Many schools of philosophy in America have adopted this Eastern teaching. This is the other extreme, and, like most extreme views, is not productive of the best results; hence the Western school of Occultists does not agree with the Eastern school on this point, which, after all, is but a question of the method of development. Suppression of the senses is not the best plan, and Western Occultists have found that better results are gained from regulation of the senses. By regulation is meant a moderate indulgence in all that

pertains to the normal use of the senses; but never yield to over-indulgence. In this manner you may have all the pleasures of life without the reactions. Sack-cloth and ashes do not indicate that the wearer of them has become spiritual. To deny the body its natural functions, or to whip or torture it, does not make a person wise nor good; and there is no more reason in trying to gain spirituality through asceticism than there is through over-indulgence. Use your senses properly and enjoy all the harmless things of life, and let the mind —not the desire—determine the extent of the use of the senses. This is regulation, the teaching of Western Occultism.

The third great basic emotion that mankind has to learn to control is sex desire. This, too, is a natural force, and is a part of the force of life and love; it is a part of the force of magnetic attraction, manifested in the Absolute, and

manifestating in every part of It according to the nature of its vehicle. In the minerals it is chemical affinity; in the animals it manifests the desire for procreation. In man this force, like sensuousness, should be regulated. Here again Western Occultism differs from the Eastern schools, where asceticism is taught. In man this emotion should be so well regulated that it should become a creative force instead of an animal desire for procreation. I do not mean that this force should only be transmuted into mental power, but that it should be used to consciously create bodies, unmarred by passion, for the use of egos who desire to reincarnate. Use this natural force, but do not abuse it; regulate it, but do not eradicate it. The normal condition of man requires that no part of his body should become atrophied or useless, but that every part of him, whether spiritual, mental, or physical, shall be in a perfect condition.

The fourth great emotion that must be conquered before perfect self-control is acquired, is vanity. This emotion is so subtle that at times it almost baffles us. The peculiarity of this fault is that the victim does not recognize his defect of character. You can seldom convince a vain person that he is vain; and because of its subtlety, it is the hardest and the very last emotion we have to conquer. The first aspect of this fault is the grosser or physical vanity which pertains to admiration for its own particular attractiveness of feature, form or face. It is the feeling which prompts you to wear a particular style of dress, not because the dress is beautiful and because you love the beautiful, but because you believe others will admire you in it. It is the same feeling which would cause a person to mutilate his horse's tail in order to attract the attention of the public to his horse and then to himself as the owner of the horse. This grosser

form of vanity we can conquer if we wish to, because occasionally it is revealed to us by our friends or enemies, and when it is discovered it can be eradicated. But this is only the beginning of the battle, because next beyond and still more subtle, is another phase of vanity which is mental, and this is still harder to recognize in ourselves.

Mental vanity expresses itself in all mental forms. If a man discovers that he is in a small degree superior to his fellow men he feels it and often looks with contempt upon his weaker brothers. He tries to dominate those whom he believes are his inferiors in intellect, forgetting the fact that he himself is but a Cosmic infant as compared with the souls who have passed in evolution beyond him. And it sometimes requires many incarnations and many sad experiences to eradicate this defect of character, which really limits his evolution.

Then comes spiritual vanity, and this

is the force which actuates all reformers. It is this vanity which makes men say: "All is wrong with the world." It is another way of saying the Supreme Consciousness is wrong in Its management of terrestrial things and I must go forth into the world and right it. God has made mistakes, and I shall correct them. I shall lift all humanity up to my plane and help all mankind to my level. I will convert the world to my views, and the people shall accept my conception of God, my politics, or my religion, and men shall be proselyted to my truth. Spiritual vanity comes in such a subtle guise that one does not recognize the motive that lies behind one's efforts; and yet the time comes in the evolution of that particular individual when his spiritual vanity must pass away, as it usually does, in martyrdom. There comes a time in that soul's career when this spiritual vanity is burned out of his nature, and he becomes a perfected, self-

conscious center in the Universal Consciousness, impersonally working for the raising up of the whole of mankind according to the Divine plan. Here is the true At-One-Ment, where your saviours pass away from the adulation and worship of men and become the unseen and generally unknown workers for humanity—the Silent Brotherhood who teach, inspire, and raise humanity as fast as it can receive, with never a word of praise, never a word of recognition, never a word of thanks or of appreciation from the world for their sacrifices and their efforts. Spiritual Vanity must pass away before perfection is reached.

At present we may battle with the first two forms of vanity and leave this last aspect to be conquered in some other incarnation.

Thus we have these four great basic emotions which must be controlled. To do this we must learn to exercise our wills. There are two very good rules by

which, if persistently followed, self-control can be attained. The first is, never speak until you have thought with your subjective mind. It will be impossible for you to speak before you have thought at all, because you cannot have a material manifestation of speech until there has been some mental action. But do not let the emotions of the objective mind become expressed in words before you have thought with the subjective mind. In other words, let your thought be divorced from emotion before you attempt to express your thoughts in speech. For example: You walk out of a warm room, suddenly the cold air strikes you, and immediately you exclaim, "I am catching cold!" This remark is the offspring of the emotion fear and is not the result of your becoming conscious of a little fresh air. The objective mind commences to manifest fear and it speaks into existence a creation of sickness. Now if you will stop

and think with your subjective mind before you exclaim into existence that cold, and claim it for your own, you will destroy the fear which would be the father of it, and no cold could be created for you.

The second rule is, never act until after you have thought with your subjective mind. Acting upon emotion usually leads to regret and is always followed by a reaction. A thousand cases could be cited to prove the truth of this statement and I have no doubt that you have thought of many examples. These two rules, if put into practice even occasionally, will help you; but if you practice them constantly you will be surprised to see how soon you will begin to dominate the four cardinal emotions; and after they are destroyed, all the others must disappear, because they are but branches from these four principal emotions.

There are certain aids which will as-

sist you to carry out these rules. First, you should realize that all uncontrolled emotions are the result of ignorance or undevelopment; and this knowledge will rob them of their power over you. You will know that you are at the emotional point in your evolution, which is an indication of ignorance of your own power of self-control. Then you will soon begin to see the need of development and set about correcting the fault.

A child fears the dark because he does not know its nature or its cause. If he is carried into a dark room, and the light is turned on, when he sees nothing there to injure him, his fear is immediately dissipated. His fear was banished when his ignorance was destroyed. If you can show a person that there is no "bad luck" except that which he has created, and that the "evil" he fears he builds for himself, immediately you destroy the power he has given to these conceptions. If a man is vain of his knowledge and he can

be made to see that the field of knowledge is unlimited, and that his vanity over the small amount that he possesses is but an indication of his great ignorance, immediately his vanity disappears. So it is by enlightenment that any or all our emotions are controlled or eliminated from us.

The second great aid is this: If we understand what habit is and know the law which underlies it, and if we know that much of our yielding to our lower natures and our lack of self-control is a matter of habit, we shall be able to destroy habits much sooner than if we do not understand them. I cannot enter very fully into this subject at this time, but will give you a good working basis to begin with. There are two elements that enter into the formation of a habit. The first is what we may call the law of periodicity, or periodical return, and the second is the initial impulse. The law of periodicity causes a thought or an act

to be repeated within a determinate time. The intensity with which the thought was projected, or the act performed, determines the time in which the tendency to repeat itself will manifest.

Let me try to make this plain to you. Look at an electric light for a moment, then shut your eyes and note the effects. Immediately there is a mental vibration or picture of a bright light that passes away after a short time; now it reappears, to pass away again. Again it appears and disappears, growing dimmer with each appearance, until finally it fades out altogether. This is an example of the action of the law of periodicity and every thought, every feeling and every tendency will repeat itself at given periods of time according to the intensity of the initial impulse that gave it birth. Recognizing this law, if you will remember the exact time your habits repeat themselves, you will be prepared to over-

come them with greater success. What is called the association of ideas is another illustration of the working of the law of periodicity. For example, if we go to our room, or to any place where we can be alone, and send out an intense thought at nine o'clock in the morning, or at any special hour, we will find on the following day at the same hour that we will be inclined to repeat the thought. If we yield to our inclination each day, at the end of a week the habit will be formed and it will require some effort to resist the temptation to repeat the practice we have begun. This is the way habits are formed through the cyclic law bringing back to us the thoughts and things we ourselves have created. Someone may say to me, "You are going to lose something," and my heart will almost stop beating as the picture is presented to my mind. The next time I see the person who made the suggestion of loss that

same picture will rise up in my mind because I associate that person with the suggestion made to me. When I pass the place where we were when the suggestion was made I will remember it and tremble with fear, and after awhile the habit of thought will become so firmly established with me that I will think of the loss predicted until the picture materializes, and becomes a reality on the objective plane.

But the same law which helped you form the habit will help you overcome it if you but reverse the rule in this way: When the mental picture recurs, destroy it by denying that it can materialize. For example: If you have been holding a picture of loss, declare that you cannot lose anything that belongs to you; and when your picture of loss comes up, refuse to look at it and put into its place a picture of something that you want. If you have a habit of thinking of yourself as an invalid, destroy that

habit of thought by picturing yourself in the possession of perfect health. If you have created the habit of picturing death for yourself, or for a friend, reverse the picture and see him and yourself well and happy; and the law of periodicity will bring your new pictures along with the old ones, since they are associated together. Each time both pictures appear, look at the new and refuse to see the old and soon the old picture will fade out and disappear and a new order of things will be established.

The third great aid in conquering the emotions is through the power of suggestion. Heretofore the objective mind has been making most of the suggestions which the subjective mind has passively received. For example: You feel a draft of cold air, and immediately your objective mind suggests to your subjective mind, which is really you, that you are taking cold; you accept the sugges-

tion, and reply, "Yes, that is true; I shall take cold if I sit in this draft;" and immediately you commence to see the picture of yourself with a cold. You have accepted the suggestion and claimed the creation of the objective mind for your own, and there is nothing that will prevent the picture from materializing for you. But if you will use the same amount of force in refusing to accept the suggestion of your objective mind that you do fighting the cold after it has materialized you will not let it materialize at all.

If you desire to conquer the emotion sensuousness, and your objective mind insists upon gratifying its appetite for the pleasure of eating, you should take the position that you do not want any more food and should suggest to your objective mind that it does not want any more. Speak to it as if it were another person or a child. If you have the habit of drinking, or smoking, and you wish to

overcome these habits, suggest to your objective mind that it does not want to drink or smoke; that there is no real pleasure to be derived from the gratification of these tastes or appetites, and you will soon see, if you persist in this use of suggestion, that your desires will change, and you will conquer sensuousness without a great deal of inconvenience or annoyance.

There are certain declarations and suggestions that most persons who work along this line find extremely beneficial and I will give you a few of them. Suggest to your objective mind: "I am your master, and you are my servant, my instrument, and you must obey me." If you persist in making this declaration you will soon begin to feel that you are master, and your objective mind must accept it as the truth; and as soon as both minds recognize the truth of that declaration from that moment self-control and self-mastery is assured.

Another way to take from the objective mind its power over the subjective mind is to declare "You cannot control me," or "You cannot disturb or make me uncomfortable." The word "cannot" expresses limitation always; used in the proper place, it destroys wrong creations; used improperly, it limits one's power to progress. It is useless to argue with the objective mind, because it is a waste of force; one might as well argue with an animal and expect to convince it of the error of its ways. The only way to be successful in conquering it is to command and compel it to obey, and when it attempts to argue with you command it to be silent. Say "Peace, be still," and let that be your answer to all its protests and arguments; and the greater the vehemence with which you speak these words, the sooner will the objective mind obey you.

Separate yourself from your objective mind in thought, and for convenience

while learning to master it, identify it with your body. Realize that you are separate from, and superior to it; treat it as if it were a child entrusted to your care by Deity to educate and enlighten. While you are putting into practice these suggestions, demand daily from the Supreme Power the highest wisdom that you are capable of receiving, and "all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

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